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Public Health Reports

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UNITED STATES.

NOTICE.

Request for information.

Referring to the brochure on bubonic plague, prepared by the Surgeon-General of the Marine-Hospital Service and published by the Treasury Department January 6, 1900, and to the further information upon the same subject contained in the successive PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS published weekly by the Bureau, it will be noticed that an effort has been, and is still being, made to determine upon the relative danger of the transmission of plague; first, by ambulant cases; second, by rats, and third, by infected food products.

There is no doubt of the transmission of plague by means of ambulant cases and rats, but the transmission of this disease through food products or other merchandise has never been demonstrated satisfactorily to the Bureau.

All readers of the PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS, therefore, both in the United States and foreign countries, are requested to transmit to the Bureau any facts proving, or seeming to prove, that the plague has been transmitted by means of food products. Due credit will be given for the information conveyed, and all will recognize the desirability of having this question settled.

[Reports to the Surgeon-General United States Marine-Hospital Service.]

Beriberi and plague at Port Townsend Quarantine.

[See PUBLIC HEALTH REPORTS, February 23, 1900, No. 8, page 377.]

PORT TOWNSEND QUARANTINE,
Port Townsend, Wash., February 18, 1900.

SIR: I have the honor to make the following report of the condition of affairs relative to the Japanese steamship *Nanyo Maru*, now held in quarantine.

This vessel arrived here January 31, seventy-five days out from Kobe and thirteen days from Honolulu. She gave a history of having carried 312 Japanese immigrants from Kobe to Yokohama, and had been disinfected at Yokohama and detained seven days on account of suspicious glandular enlargement of 3 of her passengers. These cases, according to Sanitary Inspector Eldridge, proved not to be plague, and the vessel departed, leaving these 3 behind. There were 800 passengers on board to work in the sugar plantations. I understand that these were held on the vessel for thirty days before they were allowed to land at Honolulu, and, as a result, the vessel was in a filthy condition when she got here. Two cases of beriberi were discovered—1 among the passengers and 1 among the firemen. On arrival at quarantine these were removed to the hospital and the vessel started to unload her cinder ballast. Two other cases were reported during the afternoon, 1 of whom died during the night.

The necropsy I reported at length in my letter of February 2, and it showed all the signs of beriberi, but in addition there was a general glandular enlargement all over the body. This caused me to send some of the glands and a part of the spleen to Surgeon Kinyoun at Angel Island for microscopical examination, and to recommend that the vessel be held pending his report. On February 2, 1 of the inmates of the hospital died and the necropsy was exactly similar to the first. Two additional cases of beriberi were admitted on this day and 5 on the following, making a total of 11 cases up to that date and 2 deaths. The patients in the hospital all had swollen and cedematous legs, more or less paralysis of the limbs, and complained of pain in the muscles and oppression of the heart. The necks and faces of the severer cases were also swollen and there was 1 case of suppression of urine. A personal examination showed me that about half of these had enlarged glands but none of them has ever had any fever nor have the glands been tender or painful. A large number of the crew and steerage also showed generally enlarged glands, but were well and lively. I took some of the glands of the second case and rubbed them up in a mortar with sterile water and injected 1 c. c. of the solution into the leg of a rabbit. This rabbit is alive and well fifteen days after. Three of the 9 remaining cases looked to be serious, but all have convalesced nicely except 1, who died on February 16, and presented the same appearances at the post-mortem as the other 2.

To return to the vessel, the crew were set to work discharging ballast, and a preliminary disinfection with sulphur was made in the steerage, which was the worst part of the entire vessel. The passengers were taken ashore and, after the usual bath and disinfection of clothing, were put in the barracks. The captain, under coercion, ordered a supply of fresh bread and beef for all hands. A quantity of spoiled food was condemned and burnt. The water tanks were boiled by turning in steam and a new supply of water was given. After three or four days of mechanical cleaning up by the crew and quarantine attendants, the vessel and crew were then returned to the vessel. The bathhouse and disinfecting room were disinfected at the completion of the process, as is our routine custom. The pilot was kept at the station, as he had been on board the vessel all night.

Upon receipt of a telegram from Surgeon Kinyoun that he had found something suspicious, Dr. Seavey was placed in charge of the hospital and a strict quarantine imposed upon him as had been upon the nurse and hospital from the start. The entire station, including surgeon's and attendant's quarters, was disinfected and all the clothing and bed-

ding of the complete personnel sterilized. The antipest serum was sent to the quarantine yesterday, and I have ordered everyone on the station and those in the hospital to receive an immunizing dose of 10 c. c., and I think we are taking every precaution possible.

To sum up, I would state that I have no doubt that all of these cases had beriberi; that the first one was probably recovering from an ambulant case of plague seems possible from the finding of the plague bacillus in the glands, as reported by Dr. Kinyoun. I understand that he was not ashore at Honolulu and may have received his infection at Kobe, at least seventy-six days before death. I shall, therefore, redisinfect the vessel and permit her to depart with a new crew if the owners desire, but I shall detain the entire personnel fifteen days to await developments; this I regard as very necessary. * * * I have received 24 flasks of the pest serum and ordered 3 antitoxin syringes from Seattle as soon as I received word that it was coming. All we need now is a larger supply of the antipest serum and we will be fully equipped for any emergency.

Respectfully,

M. HUGH FOSTER,
Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

Case of leprosy in an emigrant from Barbados.

NEW YORK, N. Y., *February 26, 1900.*

SIR: I have the honor to report that alien immigrant, Archibald Mandeville, who arrived at this port from Barbados per steamship *Bufon*, February 24, 1900, has this day been certified as suffering from leprosy.

Respectfully,

L. L. WILLIAMS,
Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

NOTE.—This patient has been returned to his country in accordance with quarantine regulations and immigration laws.

Inspection of immigrants coming through Canada.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF COMMISSIONER-GENERAL OF IMMIGRATION,
Washington, D. C., February 26, 1900.

SIR: Referring to a previous communication from this Bureau of date the 25th instant, No. 20905, in reply to one from you of the 1st instant, "F. L. G.," I inclose for your further information copy of a communication from the United States commissioner of immigration at St. John, New Brunswick, in relation thereto.

Respectfully,

T. V. POWDERLY,
Commissioner-General.

The SURGEON-GENERAL,
U. S. Marine-Hospital Service.

[Inclosure.]

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES COMMISSIONER OF IMMIGRATION,
St. John, New Brunswick, February 24, 1900.

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of Department letter No. 20905, in which you direct me to take special pains with inspection of 44 Russians that are supposed to have arrived via the steamship *Vancouver* at Halifax. I beg leave to report as follows:

There were 58 that were destined to the United States; 3 were returned to the vessel suffering with favus and the inspector at Portland notified by wire. They have been deported. Fifty-five were landed at Halifax; to 33 we issued certificates to admit them to